

# National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

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## **DRAFT MINUTES** **Executive Committee Conference Call** **Tuesday, April 17, 2007 12:00 Noon – 1:00 p.m., e.s.t.**

**Executive Committee Members Present:** Martin Massengale, Chair, Marty Apple, Walter Armbruster, Carol Keiser, David Thomassen, and James Zuiches

**Other Members Present:** Tom Fretz

**Executive Committee Members Absent:** George Hoffman, Vice Chair, Daryl Lund, Mary Wagner

**Others Present:** Dr. Gale Buchanan, REE, Under Secretary and (Ex-officio)

**Board Staff Participation:** Joseph Dunn, Executive Director, NAREEE Advisory Board, Shirley Morgan-Jordan, Program Support Coordinator



### **I. WELCOME AND UPDATE**

Joseph Dunn called roll of the Executive Committee members.

Martin Massengale, Chair of the NAREEE Advisory Board, provided some introductory remarks and welcomed Executive Committee members and others on the call. Martin stated that the reports the NAREEE Advisory Board has been working on are moving toward completion rapidly.

Dr. Gale Buchanan, REE, Under Secretary welcomed everyone on the call. Dr. Buchanan stated that he had just returned from a delightful visit in Lincoln, Nebraska and will be traveling back to visit the Clay Center in July to make comments. He stated that REE staff will prepare written responses to the Boards recommendations as they become available. He thanked the working groups and the whole Board for working very hard on preparing thoughtful and timely recommendations. Dr. Buchanan was asked by several Executive Committee members to comment on the Farm Bill. He stated that he would be leaving for three weeks to visit a dozen states to talk to staff about the reorganization. Dr. Buchanan also stated that it is hard to say what Congress is going to do regarding the Farm Bill but he was impressed with the Administrations approach to it as it truly reflects how the populace feels and is very positive document. He stated that he can't

imagine anybody not supporting research. Dr. Buchanan told the Executive Committee that he appreciates what they are doing.

## **II. Update Status of Reports and Workgroups**

### **► Farm Bill**

Dr. Buchanan reiterated that the Administrations version of Farm Bill has gone forward and that there was excellent input from across America into the process. It is expected that the House will try for a June mark-up.

Dr. Buchanan asked Walt Armbruster what he has been hearing about markups on the Farm bill and Walt stated that “There may be some consideration of Representative Peterson’s report.”

Dr. Buchanan replied that they are going to set aside June for mark-up but he felt that they would not be able to wait that long. He stated that there will be many hearings scheduled for the next 3 weeks regarding all of the titles of the bill. He stated that problem with “research” is that there isn’t anyone to push research to the top of the list.

Martin Massengale then suggested that we next hear a report on Specialty Crop.

### **► Review on Specialty Crop Report and Future Plans**

Walt Armbruster reported that the 2006 Specialty Crop meeting report has been released to the full Board last week for feedback by this coming Friday. All editorial changes must be forwarded to Walt as he will initiate the editing process. He stated that he didn’t anticipate many changes due to excellent interactions with the Specialty Crop Committee members during the composition of the report. He asked the Board to make changes in a timely fashion so that the report can be out by the end of the month. Martin stated that the Specialty Crop report should focus on high priority needs. Additionally, he stated that there will be a specialty crop related activity coming up next week in Arlington, VA which he will attend along with Walt. This specialty crop workshop dealing with improved mechanization and labor is being organized by ARS and CSREES and the goal for the workshop is to get feedback from stakeholders, industries and government to address this important issue that the Specialty Crop Committee identified in the Specialty Crop Report last year. Martin said that meetings such as this let us know that our reports are given attention.

### **► Food Safety**

Martin stated that each member of the Board should have received a copy of the Food Safety report from last March’s meeting. Martin then thanked Darryl Lund, Laurian Unnevehr and the Food Safety working group for all the hard work that they have done in organizing the Food Safety focus session at the March meeting and in preparing the report. Daryl commented that the Food Safety working group held a conference call yesterday, and everyone was asked review the comments and recommendations so the report can be finalized.

A question was raised about the need for an Executive Summary or if a letter accompanying the report would suffice. It was discussed that an Executive Summary is often very helpful because some people tend not to read the full report and the letter of transmittal should not be that lengthy.

Others would prefer a synopsis, especially with longer reports. The Committee agreed that if the report is more than three pages then an exec summary should accompany the report. Also, an Executive Summary allows the report authors the advantage of emphasizing the critical points of the report, and the recommendations can be outlined. Martin thought that ten days should be the limit on responding to the report.

#### ► **Relevancy and Adequacy**

Joe Dunn stated that the first draft of a report from that working group was transmitted to the Executive Committee yesterday, and a conference call will be set up to finalize some of the recommendations. No further discussion took place.

#### ► **Protocol and Review**

John Cunningham was unable to participate in this executive Committee meeting and thus a report on the progress of this working group will be tabled until he is able to attend.

### **III. Discussion of Date for the Fall Meeting**

Shirley Morgan stated that although the Board Office has had a difficult time securing a hotel for the fall meeting due to the large number of conferences/meeting going on in the Washington, DC area in October, she was able to reserve enough sleeping and meeting rooms at the Double Tree Hotel on Rhode Island Ave. for the dates of Oct 29 through the 31. Joe Dunn stated that this year we are thinking about starting the meeting late Monday noon so that one third of the Board will not have to arrive for the meeting on Sunday.

### **IV. Discussion of Subjects for Fall Meeting**

The Committee entertained several subjects for the meeting including rural communities and extension, international issues/trade, immigration, improved coordination between research, education and extension, scientific capital/R&D work force development and entrepreneurial development of bioproducts. Walt commented that labor issues have been covered at Specialty Crop meetings in the past. It was agreed that agriculture literacy and educational needs in rural communities should be a focal area to review. One of the Board members suggested having the topic of “Rural Community” and within that topic touch on immigration, education, extension issues and trade. It was recognized that the subject of “Rural Communities” is too large a topic, but we could focus on the human side of the Extension program. It was stated that leadership development may be a key component, for example through agricultural community family and youth programs.

Other potential topics discussed were food production and processing, increasing the number of practicing Ph.D. level agricultural scientists and the general need to expand and educate the agricultural workforce. Many agricultural areas are developing rapidly and there are not enough people to skilled positions.

## V. Update of Nominations

Martin and Shirley reminded Board members that are up for re-nomination that they must submit a full application package, including the AD-755, in order to be considered. The Board members were also reminded that the deadline to apply for nomination was July 20, 2007.

## VI. International and Other Items

Marty Apple asked about International Trade. He asked if the Board was going to talk about this subject at a future meeting. Martin Massengale told Marty to put that subject on the table for a discussion at the October Meeting. Marty stated that we need to be thinking about future priorities within USDA. Martin suggested Marty develop a short proposal on methods to improve prioritization of subject areas for our meetings going forward.

Joe Dunn stated that the NAREEE Advisory Board office was working with Sherry Panzer of the National Agricultural Library (NAL) to complete the development of the Board's the new website located at (<http://nareeeab.ree.usda.gov>). The Board office will continue to update the site with future reports, recommendations and REE responses.

Tom Fretz asked Martin if the NAL ad hoc working group could hold a one day meeting at NAL's facilities in Beltsville, Md. to discuss and update their most recent report. Joe Dunn told Tom that the NAREEE Advisory Board Office would have to review the budget to make sure there was enough money to hold the meeting. Joe stated that the Specialty Crop Committee is planning on holding a meeting this summer in Modesto Ca. and that meeting would take precedence since it is mandated by Congress.

The meeting adjourned at 12:47 p.m.

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MARTIN MASSENGALE  
Chair

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JOSEPH DUNN  
Acting, Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Initials  
Chair

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Initials  
Executive Director

